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SEASONABLE
REMARKS
ON SOME
PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Last PARLIAMENT.

The Second EDITION; with a PREFACE.



L O N D O N :

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PREFACE.



HIS second Edition not being ready, by some Months, so soon as was expected by the Town, it may seem a little out of the common Road to publish what was written on the dissolving of one Parliament, at a time when another is sitting; but to remove this seeming Sollecism, be pleased to remember that there are no Reflexions more useful than those which set the Past and Present in one View before our Eyes, that by comparing the Actions of both, we may know how to give our just Applause, and pay those Gentlemen, by whom the People of England have now the Honour to be represented, that Gratitude which is their Due.

You have here a cursory Review of most of the remarkable Transactions of the last Sessions of the last Parliament; and 'tis not

P R E F A C E.

to be doubted but the Memory of them would be eternized, if the succeeding Sheets had never been wrote; however, the Remarks contained in them, may be of Service to those who have not Time or Opportunity to peruse larger Treatises, and methinks 'tis pity that any Briton should remain in Ignorance of what so nearly concerns his nearest and his dearest Interests: If therefore any one of them is the wiser or the better for this Edition, which is corrected and revised with the utmost Care, it will answer the Ends, and recompence the Pains of,

Your humble Servant,

The EDITOR.



O C C A.



OCCASIONAL
REMARKS, &c.

TH E Parliament is at last dissolved. That Political Body has made it's Revolution, and our *Court-Astronomers*, who have been long *calculating* the *Aspects* of *Boroughs*, are now more than ordinarily busy in verifying their *Predictions* of a *New One*, which is to be *Saturnine* in it's Progression like the *former*, and take a Period of seven Years to finish it's Course. 'Tis now, the Emissaries of Corruption are sent, like destroying Angels, to all the Corners of the Kingdom, seeking whom they may *pervert*. This is that *important* Con-juncture, which resolves the Commonalty of *Great Britain* into their *Collective* Body, and gives them an Opportunity, either to reward such of their Representatives, as
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have, during their Deputation, steadily adhered to their *Interests*, and shewed on every Occasion the *warmest Zeal* in their Service, by placing *fresh Confidence* in them; or to testify their Resentment to others, who have, on the contrary, undeniably carried on *separate Interests*, by *rejecting* their Offers of future pretended Services.

The People of *England*, in their present Situation, are like Travellers wanting a faithful and expert Guide, or like a Vessel standing in need of a skillful Pilot; but the Question is, will they have the good Fortune to chuse such *faithful*, such *expert Guides*, such *skillful Pilots* for their *future Representatives*? I will not presume to resolve this Query; but I will venture to say, that no *Electors* can either act with Consistency, make a prudent Choice, or have the *Prosperity* of his Country *really* at heart, unless he takes a serious View of the Old Parliament, and equally weighs the *Merit* of those Laws, which have been enacted during the Term of it's Existence, and the *Excellency* of those Bills, which have not passed into a Law, before he gives his Suffrage. It cannot be denied, but such an Enquiry into the past Conduct of Representatives upon every Dissolution of Parliament, nay into that of every Member re-elected after it is chosen, would be well worthy of a *wise* and *free* People, and, I
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am persuaded, prove the most effectual Means to stem that Torrent of Corruption which usually overflows all Bounds of Decency on these Occasions.

I question not but some able Pen will oblige the World with a compleat History of the last Parliament, which may serve as a proper Retrospect for my Country-men; but in case such a thing should not appear in due Time, I have given you in the subsequent Sheets some occasional Remarks on certain Proceedings of the *last Session* of the *last Parliament*, which I imagine afford Matter, not undeserving the Attention of every *true Englishman*. And

ist, On the Reasonableness, or Unreasonableness of a Motion made in the last Session, that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to give Directions, that the *Letters and Instructions* sent to his Majesty's Ministers at the Courts of *France* and *Spain*, relating to the Execution of the Treaty of *Seville*; and *others*, sent to Mr *Woodward*, his Majesty's Minister in *Poland*, in the Year 1729, be laid before the House; and also that he would be further pleased to communicate his *good Offices* in those Transactions, which have been declared to be the principal Causes and Motives of the War, which is now begun, and carried on with so much Vigour by the united Powers of *France*, *Spain*, and *Sardinia*, with what

Application had been made to him by the several Parties now engaged in the War, founded upon Treaties, or other Engagements.

2dly, On the Petition of the Druggists, Grocers, China-men, and others dealing in Tea.

3dly, On the Motion for preventing Officers not above the Rank of Colonels of Regiments of such Land-Forces as should at any time be allowed by Authority of Parliament, from being deprived of their Commissions, otherwise than by Judgment of a Court-Martial to be held for that purpose, or by Address of either House of Parliament.

4thly, On the Motion made, that an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give Directions, that there be laid before this House the Proceedings which have been had for and in the prosecuting Sir *Archibald Grant*, Baronet, one of the late Committee for managing the Affairs of the Charitable Corporation; *William Burroughs*, Esq; one other of the said late Committee; *William Squire*, one of the late Assistants for managing the Affairs of the said Corporation; *George Robinson*, Esq; late circulating Cashier of the said Corporation; *Richard Woolley* and *Thomas Warren* Brokers and Assistants to *John Thomson*, late Warehouse-keeper to the said Corporation, for the indirect and fraudulent Practices

Practices committed by them, in relation to the Affairs of the said Corporation, pursuant to an Address of the House of Commons to his Majesty in the last Session of Parliament, and his Majesty's most gracious Answer thereto.

5thly, On the Bill to amend and render more effectual an Act made in the ninth Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne, entituled, *An Act for Securing the Freedom of Parliaments, by further qualifying the Members to sit in the House of Commons.*

6thly, On the Bill for Securing the Freedom of Parliaments, by limiting the Number of Officers for sitting in the House of Commons.

And concerning the first.

It was universally agreed, at the opening of the last Session, that the then Posture of Affairs in *Europe* was equally critical and difficult. Both King and Parliament seemed sensible of it, nay in a kind of Perplexity as to what Part *England* was to act in the Commotions. His Majesty in his most gracious Speech from the Throne, recommended it in the strongest Terms to their most mature Deliberations; the Parliament on the other hand seemed to confess, that the unhappy Conjunction demanded the utmost Stretch of human Wisdom to determine with Honour and Safety.

Such

Such an exprefs Diffidence from the Oracles of the Nation was alarming, in proportion to the high Opinion every one conceives of their great Wisdom, and seemed to imply a Necessity for a more than ordinary Deliberation. We have since seen after what manner the great Council of the Kingdom thought proper to proceed in this weighty Affair : Some, in that august Assembly, not conceiving themselves sufficiently prepared for giving the mature Judgment required, without taking first some previous Steps, as the Basis of their Counsel ; without taking a closer View of every Circumstance, that related to the present Disturbances, and enquiring into the probable Consequences of them, so far at least as they concerned the Welfare of *England*, made, for the thorough Information of their Judgment, the Motion in Question ; while others were sanguine enough to suppose themselves equal to the Task on the bare Proposal of the Debate. The *one* was not flexible enough to pay an *implicit Belief*, or judge at *random* ; the *other* thought nothing further wanting to proceed on so important a Consideration, than a mere abstract Parliamentary Wisdom, without the least Aids, and even affected to wonder at the Unreasonableness of such Opposition.

Difference in Opinion will unavoidably arise in mixed Assemblies ; but above all, in
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those where *private Views* scandalously take place of *public Good*. We have the Misfortune (for what honest Man can call it otherwise !) to live in Days of such *rank Dependency*, that it is almost a Crime to mention *public Spirit*, or wish for an *Unanimity*. But in order to set this Contrariety of Principles in as clear a Light as possible, and avoid Perplexity, let us suppose a *Courtier* and a *Country Gentleman* reasoning upon the Premises, in order, as they stand, in the following Manner.

Country Gent. Surely, Sir, you cannot but own the Parliament has given notable Dispatch to the Public Business this Session ?

Courtier. Pretty well,—pretty well—I'm glad 'tis prorogued—I'm glad 'tis prorogued.

Country Gent. You would rather say you are sorry it is dissolved, for I dare engage that's your Meaning, Sir.

Courtier. 'Tis no very great Matter which was meant, since it is said, by *very good Judges*, that we are already pretty sure of the Election.

Country Gent. If those *very good Judges*, you speak of, have the same Sagacity at *telling Boroughs*, as they have at *telling Noses*, I shall not wonder at it; but methinks it should fire every Elector with honest Indignation, to see himself thus *infamously*

mously calculated ; to be supposed capable of being *bought*, by those, who now begin barefaced to plead a *Right* to *sell* him again at an exorbitant Interest ; for certain I am, their *late Services* do not entitle them to much Favour from their Constituents—Witness some Proceedings even in the last Session.

Courtier. Prejudice and Defamation to the last Degree ! For Heaven-sake ! what one thing was there *done*, but what was perfectly agreeable to the Interest of *England* ?

Country Gent. But do you think, Sir, there was nothing left *Undone*, which was not as much, or more so ? For instance ; Did we weigh our Situation with all the Wisdom and Circumspection the Criticalness of the Juncture seemed to require ?

Courtier. O ! I comprehend you, Sir ; and think it was highly *imprudent* in the Parliament to *expect*, and as *unreasonable* to *require*, a Communication of the *Letters, Instructions, good Offices, Applications, &c.* alluded to ; and that a Demand of that Nature betrayed a great *Diffidence* in his Majesty, and no less a Want of *Respect* for the *Sacred Character*.

Country Gent. As how a Want of Respect, Sir ?

Courtier. Yes, Sir, a Want of Respect—Did not his Majesty express himself in
these

these plain Words ? “ It is at all Times to
 “ be wished, that the Business of Parlia-
 “ ment might be carried on free from
 “ Heats and Animosities, and with that
 “ Temper, which becomes the Justice
 “ and Wisdom of the Nation : At this
 “ time, it is more particularly to be desired
 “ that this Session may not be protracted
 “ by unnecessary Delays, &c.” Was it there-
 fore kind to his Majesty, or contributing to
 the Welfare of *Great Britain*, so immedi-
 ately to raise Difficulties and Clamours with-
 out the least Necessity ; without the least
 Foundation ?

Country Gent. How, Sir, without Founda-
 tion ? I hope you will grant that his Ma-
 jesty’s most gracious Speech is grounded on
 Reason ?

Courtier. It is allowed by all Parties,
 Sir, to be as good, as well penn’d, and po-
 pular a Speech as ever was delivered from
 the Throne.

Country Gent. Then, Sir, I think it will
 not be very difficult to prove, that the Ex-
 pectation of Parliament, touching those
 Points, was neither *imprudent* nor *unrea-
 sonable*, but founded on that very Speech,
 and consequently founded on *Prudence* and
Reason. Was not his Majesty pleased to
 assure us, in one Part of his most gracious
 Speech, “ That he had had no Part, except
 “ by his good Offices, in those Transactions

“ which have been declared to be the prin-
 “ cipal Causes and Motives of the War,
 “ which is now begun, and carried on against
 “ the *Emperor*, with so much Vigour, by
 “ by the united Powers of *France Spain*,
 “ and *Sardinia* ?” Did he not, in another
 Place, emphatically recommend to Parlia-
 ment, “ Not to determine *too hastily* upon
 “ so critical and important a Conjunction,
 “ but to consider *thoroughly* what the Ho-
 “ nour and Dignity of his Crown and King-
 “ doms, the *true Interest* of his *People*, and
 “ the *Engagements* we are under to the seve-
 “ ral Powers we are in Alliance with, may
 “ in Justice and Prudence require of us ?”
 Was not his Majesty himself pleased to exa-
 mine *Facts* ? And did he not further urge
 the *Circumspection* of Parliament, where he
 is pleased to say, “ It must therefore be
 “ thought most *safe* and *prudent*, *thoroughly*
 “ to weigh and consider *all Circumstances*
 “ before we come to a *final Determina-*
 “ *tion* ?”

Did not these emphatical Royal Precau-
 tions therefore sufficiently justify the Motion
 in Question ? And do they not prove it
 founded on *Prudence* and *Reason* ? If his
 Majesty has had no Part in those Transac-
 tions which have been declared to be the
 principal Causes and Motives of the War,
 except by his *good Offices*, as he is pleased to
 assure us, where was the *Unreasonableness* of
 the

the Expectation to be acquainted with the *Nature* of those *good Offices* his Majesty has been pleased to employ? How could the Parliament possibly correspond with his Majesty's prudent Caution of *thoroughly* considering what the Honour and Dignity of the Crown and Kingdom; the *true Interest* of the *People*, and the *Engagements* we are under to the several Powers in alliance with us, may in *Prudence* and *Justice* require from us? How were they able *thoroughly* to weigh and consider *all Circumstances*, unless they were made acquainted with all what *passed* at *France* and *Spain* (with respect to *England*) on the Execution of the Treaty of *Seville*, and likewise in *Poland* in the Year 1729 (with respect to the Election of King *Stanislaus*) being those Transactions which are said to be the *principal Causes* and *Motives* of the War? Would not a proper Explanation of these, probably enable us to know the *Nature* of those *Engagements* we are said to be under, to the several Powers in Alliance with us, and what they may in *Justice* and *Prudence* require from us. In short, are the Words *all Circumstances* without a Meaning? Or are they to be understood in a limited Sense, confined to the *Circumstances* of the M—r? For my part, I cannot see how you can reconcile, with any Consistency, the not determining *too hastily* upon so *critical* and im-

portant a Conjunction, but *thoroughly* weighing and considering *all Circumstances*, to swallowing *Facts implicitly*, and giving Advice in a *crude, undigested* Manner.

Courtier. Give me Leave to say, Sir, that you greatly mistake his Majesty: 'Tis the highest Folly to imagine he could mean by *all Circumstances* a Communication of the *Letters*, and *Instructions*, &c. which you mention; for had he thought them *fit* and *necessary* for *Inspection*, he would certainly have offered them *voluntarily*; therefore we may conclude, that the Parliament ought not to be acquainted with *every Affair* of Government.

Country Gent. The Parliament, Sir, has, and I hope will ever have, a Right, at all times, to know *every Thing*; especially in what relates to the *Interest* and *Security* of the Nation, as I think the present Question plainly does. Whenever this Privilege is refused, without the clearest, the justest, Grounds, the Negative is liable to Suspicion of some other View than the *Good* of *England*. Indeed it may not be expedient, or prudent, for the Parliament to exert this Right on all Occasions: But surely the present critical Conjunction, where the Public Safety is at stake, where his Majesty's good Offices have been ineffectual, and his Royal Intentions defeated, loudly demanded the Exercise of it, in order to shew the Wisdom
of

of them, and expose the Ingratitude of those who were deaf to it.

Let us suppose a friendly Gentleman in common Life, had long used his good Offices for bringing two neighbouring Families, just on the point of a Rupture, to a good Understanding with each other, but finding them at last ineffectual, has Recourse to some of his Friends for Assistance in this nice Conjunction, pray would not these Gentlemen expect, with Reason, to be informed of the Steps had been taken in the Affair, that they might not proceed on old, but new Measures; and if not gratified, but he pursued his own Way of thinking, would they not be apt to call it Self-sufficiency, and his Request a kind of Insult upon their Understandings? Certainly—To give his Majesty Advice becoming the Wisdom of Parliament, such an Information was essential; otherwise you may as well tell me, that a Man can see farther in a foggy Day, than when the Sun shines, un-obscured, and in all it's Splendor—Therefore, if *all Circumstances* were not meant, *nothing* was meant; and the Refusal of *some*, spoke a *Necessity* of *all*.

Courtier. Your Comparison, Sir, does by no means hold good. There's a wide Difference between *public* and *private* Affairs—But I hope you will allow the Death of *Augustus* was the Cause of the War?

Country

Country Gent. An accidental Cause, I grant: His Death set fire to the Train, but the Combustibles were laid long before--But this is going from the Point--- I doubt not but that will be fully proved at a more proper Season; when the fruitful Crops of Treaties of late Years shall come upon the Carpet; when they shall be found to be like *Nuts*, the worse for being plentiful; when it shall discover the *unstable, shifting* Measures, of a *certain Person* at the Helm.--- *vent*

Courtier. But why, pray Sir, is that *certain Person*, you seem to hint at, to be accountable for the Ambition and Conduct of foreign Courts? If they, to gratify their particular Views, disturb the Tranquillity of *Europe*, presently the *English* Ministry must be in Fault; 'tis *they* must be the Cause, and bear the Reproach of *all*, as if the *English* Ministry had the power to *do all*! 'tis for this your parallel History, and ironical Panegyric are dress'd up! 'tis for this they are made *Angels*, that they may appear the *greater Devils*! 'Tis for this they are called a *shifting* Ministry! a *blundering* Ministry! a *corrupt* Ministry! and complimented with I know not what modish Epithets; but if Gentlemen, who have the Honour to serve the Crown, are to be treated in this *Cavalier* manner, both *within*, and *without* Doors, there will be no such Thing as carrying on the Public Business with

with Honour and Credit. Calling of Names, I must tell you, Sir, is not the Language of Parliament, and whatever *indecent* Liberties that Gentleman's Enemies may take, he is ever careful to remember both his high Station, and the Dignity of of the Place he is in.

But why all this Outrage? Why don't they speak out? Has he not over and over publickly desir'd they wou'd? Is he not ready to have his Actions canvass'd in the strictest manner, and laid open to the whole World? Let me tell you, Sir, he scorns to steal Praise. Truth will prevail at last, when his Innocence will stand confest, to the utter Confusion of all his Opposers — Yet all this will not satisfy their Prejudice; whatever he is, whatever he does, all's wrong; he must be abus'd!

Country Gent. Why really, Sir, it wou'd even puzzle the *Poet Laureat* to find an Epithet, that is suitable for the Gentleman; but if you don't like a *shifting*, term it, if you will a *wheeling* Ministry, for they have *wheel'd*, I think, to every Point of the Compass. For my part, I cannot help calling Things by their *proper* Names, as *black, black; white, white*; so when I see a Man do *one thing* to Day, *another* to Morrow, a *different* the next, I am apt to call him a *wavering, fickle* Man, on whom there is no Dependance, and who would
find

find it difficult to persuade the World into a Belief of his Wisdom. If the Ministry had desir'd we should have entertain'd a better Opinion of their Intellects, why did they not, when an Opportunity offered, confound their Enemies, by submitting their Measures to the Consideration of Parliament. If they are really as prudent, disinterested, and good as is pretended, wou'd not the Minister have promoted an Enquiry, which must have ended so much to his Advantage and Glory? We may reasonably suspect therefore, since he did not, that all his *specious* Offers of exposing his political Conduct to the severest Scrutiny, are mere *Bluster*, and so many mean Artifices to amuse and baffle the Enquiry he would seem so much prepared for. If he has had it in his Power to strike his Enemies dumb at once, and declined it, what can the World infer from that Backwardness, but a tacit Confession, to give it no worse Name, of *previous weak* Measures? Will not this rather serve to *increase*, than *lessen* the Number of his Enemies? Will the good People of *England* be any longer amused and deluded by empty Pretences? Or would any thinking Man suffer himself to be imposed upon by an itinerant Retailer of Drugs, and ineffectual Plaisters, who endeavours, by plausible Speeches, to conceal his *Quackery*, and *knavish Cunning*?

Upon

Upon the whole, Is not this affected Offer of an Enquiry a mere *jest*? a downright *Banter* on the *British* Parliament? — 'Tis as if a Man, accus'd of having stolen Goods, shou'd hector, and say, *Search my House, and welcome!* but takes care, at the same time, to keep all the Avenues well guarded. Had he therefore been *heartly*, and join'd *Issue* in the present Question, all hard Names, and Irony, would have vanish'd upon the Appearance of *Minerva* in the Enquiry; and then indeed he wou'd have had no Occasion to *steal* Praise.

Courtier. You either cannot, Sir, or will not see the Reasonableness of this Refusal.

Country Gent. Indeed, I cannot.

Courtier. Then I will open your Eyes, Sir — Don't you see plainly, that he chose rather to suffer in his Reputation, for a while, than consent to a Proposal, that in it's Consequences wou'd have prov'd fatal to his Country, which is the first, and indeed sole Concern of Patriotism?

Country Gent. Where, pray, wou'd have been the fatal Consequence to *England*? — A little more of your *Political Eye-Water*, if you please.

Courtier. What Sir! if the *different Language* we have been oblig'd to speak, at the *different Courts* of *Europe*, had been made made public, wou'd it not, instead

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of

of contributing towards reconciling the present Broils, rather have increas'd them?

Country Gent. I'm sorry to hear, Sir, that our Offices of Mediation, and other Measures, are of such a Nature, that the Knowledge of them would inflame the Quarrels of *Europe* still more than they are. This *different* Language, therefore, I'm afraid, is *different* from what it *shou'd have been*, and to me discovers an *Instability*, unbecoming Politicians, and of which, perhaps, some are now heartily asham'd.

Courtier. And for my part, Sir, I think it rather shews Wisdom; for what might be very *proper* to say to *one Power*, might be highly *improper* to say to *another*; and as our Interests and Views are not the same at all Courts, our Expressions of Course must be diversify'd, and suited to our respective Designs. For instance, wou'd any Man, imploy'd to accommodate Differences among any Set of People have the Folly to tell what he shou'd think proper to say to each? — No, surely — If he did, he wou'd never succeed, or deserve to be entrusted again.

Country Gent. I grant, Sir, with Respect to our Transactions with the Powers on the Continent, it may be wise and politic to vary our Language, provided we are not too lavish of Promises and Concessions, and it is done with a view of gain-
ing

ing any advantageous Point ; but with Regard to your latter Supposition, I cannot, by any means, allow it bears the least mark of Wisdom ; for really, Sir, were I an Arbitrator of Differences, I shou'd just say the *same thing* to *one Party*, that I shou'd say to the *other*, *viz.* point out to each the ill Consequences of a tedious and vexatious *Law-Suit*, and not *flatter* and *bribe* the Parties with vain Promises of *This* nor *That*. Honesty is the best Policy in this Case ; for if you deal sincerely, the knowledge of your Language will have the greater Weight : If not, you run great hazard of drawing them all on your back, when they come to confer Notes with one another, and will be deservedly branded with the odious and ridiculous Name of *Busy-Body*. Or, supposing I were to make a Bargain for a Friend, in my Opinion, I should but ill deserve his Thanks, if by a *slovenly* Compact, he shou'd be afterwards oblig'd to pay ten times more for the Purchase than it was worth.

Courtier. But as nothing, Sir, has, as yet, appear'd to the prejudice of *England*, but on the contrary, the King of *Spain* speaks of our Mediation in the handsomest manner in his Manifesto, for God's sake ! how cou'd the Gentlemen in the Opposition doubt it, and in so doing protract the Session by *unnecessary Delays* ? I am cer-

tain, if my House were on Fire, I shou'd not take that Servant for my Friend, who, instead of endeavouring to extinguish it, shou'd officiously employ himself in looking for the Person that did it. — No — let us first put it out I shou'd say, and then it will be time enough to look for the Person that did it.

Country Gent. I am not at all surpriz'd at the Commendation you mention; there are Powers that dread our Opposition, and court our Assistance; that wait to see what Measures we shall take; 'twill be time enough then to make Cavils on the Authority of certain good Offices, and I am mistaken if they do not, whatever Part we shall think fit to act. As to the comparison of your House being on Fire, that is no way applicable in the present Case: thank God, *England* is not yet in a Flame, and perhaps wou'd not have been so, had not our Representatives been refus'd what in Reason, Justice, and the present Exigency of Affairs, seem'd to give them a Right to expect.

Courtier. But, Sir — surely you do not consider, that had his M——y been inclin'd to lay before the House those *Letters, Instructions, &c.* you hint at, it would infallibly have destroy'd our Credit in any future Negotiation with foreign Powers.

Country

Country Gent. I dare engage, Sir, the Political Commerce we have with our Neighbours would not have fared a bit the worse for it. 'Tis a fallacious Pretence, and may be urged with equal Strength of Reason to skreen the Measures of a future *weak* Minister, by which he shall have involved his Country. Certainly we might have disclosed Things relating to ourselves, without offending any Power on Earth, especially as the Negotiation was past. I am sure, our wise Neighbours the *Dutch* would not be complaisant enough to sacrifice the real Welfare of the Common-wealth thro' Dread of any Power whatever. In short, it is plainly to be perceived that the whole Reasoning of your Party was grounded on an Apprehension of *displeasing* People *Abroad*, or, (what is more likely) People *at Home*; but should we have been deterred by such a chimerical Objection from forming a right Judgment of what was our true Interest? Should we have studied more the *Humour* of others than the *Welfare* of ourselves? Would those Powers, of whom we were so tender, have been so generous to us? or was the Safety of any *particular Person* fit to be set in competition with the *Good of England*? Should we not rather have shewn, that the Safety and Welfare of the Nation is the first Consideration in all our public Proceedings, and to which every other

other must give way? Will not a Neglect of it rather draw the Insults of foreign Powers upon us? or could they reasonably have been displeased at our taking such Measures as we judged most conducive to the Common Safety? I have no Notion of this Fear of disobliging. Tokens of Pusillanimity were never of service either to *Persons* or *States*; therefore, in my Opinion, every thing ought to have been laid open, that we might have been able to form a Judgment adequate to the Danger of the Conjunction, and conformable to the Meaning and Sense of his Majesty's most gracious Speech, where he is pleased to caution the Parliament, *thoroughly to weigh and consider all Circumstances before they came to a final Determination.*

Courtier. Yes, Sir, we know your Party is for diving into the Bottom of every thing, in order to gratify your darling Passion of finding Fault.

Country Gent. If it could be made appear that there were no real Grounds, I protest to you, tho' I have not the best Opinion in the World of the *Integrity*, or *Abilities* of a *certain* Gentleman, I would be the first to commend him; till then you must excuse me, if I cannot applaud his Measures by the *Lump*. I know not why we should be greater *Bigots* in *Politics* than in *Religion*, and take every thing implicitly from
the

the Mouths of your *Leaders*. *Ministers* are as *fallible* as *Priests*, and we run as great Danger of being *damned* in a *civil* Sense, by too strictly adhering to the *one*, as we do in a *religious* one, by pinning our Faith upon the Sleeves of the *other*.

Courtier. Sir, there is not the least Shadow of Reason for this Insinuation. It is not to be doubted but the Parliament will be made acquainted with every thing in due time ; but it was not then a fit Season.

Country Gent. That's an Answer we are but too well acquainted with ; but if that was not a *fit Season*, another will be *too late*, and our Knowledge of antecedent Transactions, after we have taken our present Measures, fruitless and vain. Would any reasonable Man take a House on a Lease, without previously examining if the Foundation was good ? or purchase an Estate without being well assured the Title was unexceptionable ? or defer till after Marriage, an Enquiry into the Circumstances of his Wife ? — Certainly no — To act in this manner, would be like the Country-man in the Fable, who ran in the dark over a fine Bed of Tulips, and then went with a Candle to see if any of them were crushed. — But our Conversation on this Head is already spun to a greater Length than I proposed ; and since 'tis utterly impossible to convince a Person, who is resolved to continue obstinate,

nate, I shall desist urging the Matter any farther; and should be glad to know your Opinion concerning the Petition of the Druggists, China-men, and others dealing in Tea?

Courtier. Sir, it was an insolent and unreasonable Petition, calculated merely to set the People in a Flame; and brought in only to give an Interruption to the more pressing Business then in hand.

Country Gent. I am sorry to hear that any Business can be more pressing to an *honest Parliament* than that of *redressing Grievances*: I always thought *that* was the very first thing to be considered: Those of our Forefathers, who had the Honour to be Members of that August Body, were too stubborn to listen to any Motion for *Supplies*, till they had first secured for their People that Ease which their Necessities demanded, and the Nature of Things would admit of.

Courtier. But, Sir, you do not consider the Conjunction.

Country Gent. Yes, I do consider the Conjunction, and know that there have been others of a more dangerous Nature; at least than this appears to be, by any thing we are allowed to be acquainted with; and yet they have not been thought a sufficient Excuse for delaying to satisfy the People: And, indeed, since from the People these
Supplies

Supplies are to be raised, I think 'tis but reasonable *they* should be considered in the first Place.

Courtier. What do you mean by the People, Sir? The People, in general, have nothing to complain of; they are satisfied; — they are happy: — The Persons you mention are only an inconsiderable Number of petty Druggists, Grocers, Chintzes, and others that deal in Tea; a Commodity that serves only to indulge the Luxury of the Nation.

Country Gent. I readily enough agree with you, that since that Herb has been so much in Vogue we are more effeminized; but sure that cannot be disagreeable to a Party whose Interest it is to have us supple. — But since Tea makes so considerable a Part of his Majesty's Revenue, I cannot but think it hard the Dealers in it should labour under the Inconveniencies they complain of, and which any one, who has any just Notion of an Excise, must believe they really feel: Especially when they have offered to make it evident that by taking off that Excise, the Duties arising from it would amount to near an hundred thousand Pounds *per Annum* more than is now collected. —

Why therefore should an Impost be continued so cruel to the Subject, and so injurious to the King, if a certain Gentleman, (I had forgot to say Right Honourable) had

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not a By-end in it, exclusive of either King or Country ? ---But I am afraid the Petition of these honest Traders fared the worse for their going about to prove, that an Excise was so far from adding to his Majesty's Revenue, that it was a considerable Diminution of it ; and that since it had been laid, the Number of Smugglers had greatly increased, and the Commodity more liable to Adulteration ; because, if this had been made out, as it certainly would have been, nothing could have produced a clearer and more manifest Proof, that an Excise on any other Goods must have drawn on the same Evils, and consequently all the fine Arguments for which Messieurs *Osborne* and *Walsingham*, and their Fellow-Hirelings, have so much cudgell'd their poor Brains, and have appeared, if possible, more false, and more ridiculous than ever.

Courtier. You grow bitter, Sir ; those Gentlemen know perfectly well what they say ; nor ought the Virtue and Integrity of that Right Honourable Person, against whom your Spleen is chiefly levelled, to be called in question, on the Instigation of such inconsiderable Wretches as these late Petitioners.

Country Gent. Just the Mode of all your Party---You upbraid us with Bitterness, and at the same time launch into the most low and scurrile Reflections yourselves. Tho' 'tis
easy

easy to perceive, that were he that threw the first Stone to be condemned, on whom the Sentence would fall.— INSIGNIFICANT WRETCHES,---MADMEN,---IDIOTS, ---MOB,---RIOTERS,--- and STURDY BEGGARS are the Terms by which of late our greatest Traders and most wealthy Merchants have been distinguished.---But it is not to be wondered at that a City, which has made so glorious, and ever to be remembered, a Stand for *Liberty*, should become hateful to the *Enemies of Liberty*; or that an ignorant pretending *Pedagogue*, who from *whipping his Boys*, had a Rod put into his Hand with the Hope of *scourging a whole Nation*; and a little *hackney Clerk*, who from *drawing Briefs* had been flattered with the Imagination of *drawing Articles* for the effectual *enslaving* a brave and free People, should become virulent on their Disappointment, and testify their Regret in such Phrases as are most natural to them.---- But these, indeed, *are* Wretches beneath Notice, and I ought to be ashamed, that any Provocation should oblige me to make Mention of them; especially since I know such Provocations are given with no other Design than to elude any farther Enquiry, and divert the Argument; to which however I shall now return, and again desire to be informed, wherefore you think the Petition before us was unworthy the Consideration of Parliament?

Courtier. Sir, I have already told you, the present Situation of our Affairs would not allow Time, even tho' it had been of the most reasonable Nature imaginable: Whereas it was wholly the reverse; and contrived, promoted, and presented, by Persons who are no Friends to the Administration.

Country Gent. As to the first of your Objections, without you can make it appear that the *Redress of Grievances*, as I said before, is an Affair of little moment, I cannot admit it as a justifiable Excuse: The other is still much worse; for if it can be proved, that a certain Number of his Majesty's loyal Subjects labour under any Inconvenience, and that the relieving them would at the same time be an Advantage to his Majesty, the Motion made for considering the Petition could not but be good, by whom-ever it was contrived, promoted, or presented. But *no Friend to the Administration* is the Brand of Infamy, with which you stigmatize all who disapprove of the Measures of a certain *Minister*; yet while you pretend the most profound Love and Reverence for the Sacred Person on the Throne, disloyally and prophanely blend *his unerring Conduct* with that of his *mistaking Servant*; by ascribing all that is said of the latter as invidious Reflections on the former; and boldly and openly asserting, that
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we cannot impute any Miscarriage in public Matters, to the *one*, without failing in that high Respect and Duty, which is undoubtedly owing from us to the *other*. If this be not the utmost affront to Truth, and the greatest Indignity to Majesty, I know not what is so : — And yet these are the Men who call themselves the Friends and faithful Servants of the King, and accuse those, who wou'd willingly lose their whole Stock of Blood in the discharge of their Duty to him and his illustrious House, of Disaffection, and *Jacobite*, or *Republican*, Principles.

Courtier. Well, Sir, you talk loudly of your Zeal for his Majesty ; but are your Words and Actions of a-piece ? Does not some other Motions made in Parliament this last Sessions, by those Gentlemen you mention, plainly contradict this Love and Duty you wou'd boast of.

Country Gent. I suppose you mean That to prevent all Officers in the Army, not above the rank of Colonels, from being deprived of their Commissions but by the Judgment of a Court-Martial to be held for that purpose, or an Address from either House of Parliament ?

Courtier. I do, Sir, and certainly it wou'd puzzle the most sagacious of you all, to prove such a Bill was not an Attempt to encroach on the Royal Prerogative ;
and

and had it pass'd, wou'd have left his Majesty no Command over those who receiv'd their Commissions from him, nor Power to discharge such among them as he found unworthy of his Service.

Country Gent. Not at all, Sir; are not all Subaltern Officers under the Command of their Superiors? and wou'd not those Superiors have remained under command of the King, and at his Royal Pleasure to be removed? — The Design of this Bill, therefore, was not to invade any Part of what is *legally* his Majesty's *Prerogative*, but for the better securing the Constitution, or in other words, the *Freedom of Parliaments*, and the *Liberty and Property* of the *Subject*.

Courtier. Ashow, pray, Sir? for I confess myself absolutely in the dark as to this Point.

Country Gent. 'Tis easy to make good my Assertion, Sir, as to both. In the first place concerning securing the *Freedom of Parliaments*, by which is meant securing the free Voices of the Members, we know that many of these Officers have a share in the Legislature; and can it, I say, in an Age, which I believe even yourself will allow too prone to Corruption and Self-interest, be expected that a Gentleman shou'd have so little Consideration for his Bread, which, perhaps, depends solely on his Commission

mission, as to run the risque of losing it, by giving his Vote contrary to the Interest of those Persons, who may have enough Power to procure it to be taken from him. Such a Bill therefore, I think, must be acknowledged to be highly conducive towards the obtaining a free and unbiass'd Parliament.

Then as to the second Article, tho' under his present Majesty's Reign, I grant we have not the least room to apprehend any danger from the Power of the Army being solely lodg'd in the Crown, without any Dependance on the Parliament, yet in succeeding Times it may so happen, that some Prince may arise of more despotic Principles, less tender of the Welfare of his Subjects, and who shall centre his whole wishes in rendring himself absolute; one who shall chuse to rule us with a Rod of Iron, rather than a Sceptre of Love and Meekness; and if a Prince of such a Disposition, supported by a numerous and well disciplin'd Army, garbled and modell'd to his Designs, dependant on him, and him alone, should ever fill the Throne, (which God forbid) pray what wou'd then become of all our boasted Freedom? — Wou'd you not think that Captain, too rashly presuming, who shou'd put out to Sea, tho' in the calmest Weather, without having first provided, as much as human Wisdom

Wisdom will admit, against the inclemency of a rougher Gale? — Do not all well-govern'd States, while in the most perfect Peace with all the World, take care to put themselves in such a Condition as not to invite a War? — Does not the skillful Physician warn us in Health to guard against Diseases? — In a word, Do not all the Blessings of this Life require the utmost Caution for rendering them permanent, and is the Liberty of *Great Britain* alone of such slight Weight as to be left to Chance, whether it is retain'd or lost? Certainly no: Tho' that noble Fire, which so warmly actuated our Ancestors in the glorious Cause, may seem to glow, at present, with a less shining ardor, the heat is not so far exhausted as to leave our Bosoms cold enough to give it up. I dare believe there is not one *English* Man, at least not above one, who either wishes, or wou'd endure to see, his Country become the Prey of Arbitrary Power: When then can we more properly apply for this so much desired Security against all future Encroachments, as when we have the blessing of a Prince who owes his Crown to the Liberty of his People, and who, in all his Actions, testifies he has nothing more at heart than to preserve it to them?

Courtier. Sir, These are Suppositions which ought not to be made; and however

ever they may be veil'd, contain the most pernicious and seditious Intuendo's ; but 'tis easy to perceive the Point you aim at, and how affectionate it is to the King to wish a Parliamentary Army, I leave any one to judge.

Country Gent. No, Sir, I wish no Parliamentary Army : I am for a Royal Army ; but, at the same time, an Army, which, as it is paid by the People, shou'd have so much Dependance on the People, as not to be able to do any thing in Prejudice of them, in case, as I said before, some future Monarch shou'd endeavour to turn the Current of it's Force that way.

Courtier. It must be confest, you are wonderful quick-sighted to discern Accidents, between which, and us, there must be a vast space of Time, probably Eternity ; thank Heaven, *Great Britain* is blest'd with a numerous and Royal Offspring, and we cannot, without the most manifest Injustice, imagine any such thing will ever happen under the Reign of his present most excellent Majesty, or that of any branch of his illustrious House. But were we to suppose, as you wou'd have us, and put Fancy to the Rack to dress up Dangers, in the most glaring and horrible Colours, from the Ambition of some Prince to come, wou'd it not be passing a very cruel Judgment on the Gentlemen of the Army, who are *Bri-*

tons themselves, to suspect they wou'd assist in any Aim, tending to subvert the Liberties of their Native Country.

Country Gent. Sir, I have as good an Opinion of the Officers of the Army as you can have, tho' I am far from allowing they are all *Britons*; because, every body knows, there are a great many among them that receiv'd their Birth and Education in Countries, where even the Name of Liberty seems forgotten, and can scarce believe the Ceremony of *Naturalization* is so much the Lake of Oblivion, as to make them entirely forget that implicate Obedience to the Crown, which they imbib'd with their first Nourishment: But were such as these to be totally discharg'd, and all Commissions fill'd up with Names, only of our own growth, 'tis hard to assure ourselves that where Bread is depending, *Subsistence* wou'd not get the better of *Patriotism*. At least, methinks, it wou'd not have been amiss to have provided against even a possibility of Danger this way; and if we must keep up a Number of Forces, to keep them, in such a manner, as might defend us from all Apprehensions that we were not paying them for making a Yoak for our own Necks.

Courtier. But, Sir, you do not consider that this Bill was of such a Nature, as wou'd have chang'd the Constitution, by introducing

ducing a fourth Power into the Legislature, a Military one, the ill Effects of which we have had Experience : When Offences in the Army are liable only to the Inspection and Punishment of the Army, 'tis to be fear'd they wou'd pay little regard to the *Civil* Law ; and Abuses might then happen, that wou'd ill become a Free People to bear.

Country Gent. This is an Argument altogether evasive : Are not most Offences now adjudg'd in the same manner ? Besides, as I take it, Sir, this Bill had no Relation to the Tryal of Offences, either by the *Civil* or *Military* Law ; but only a Restriction, that no Officer, beneath the Rank of a Colonel, shou'd be removed but by the Judgment of a Court-Martial, or an Address from Parliament ; in order that they might not be too much under the Influence of the Crown against the Freedom of *Parliaments*, or the Liberty of the Subject in general ; and also to prevent any brave worthy Gentleman, in the Army, at least, from being injured by the sly Insinuations of Court Informers, a number of whom are continually on the watch for an Opportunity to traduce true Merit, and are not only prompted by their own natural Antipathy, to those good Qualities in others, which they cannot arrive at themselves ; but frequently receive the Salary of Wickedness,

when some over-grown *Minister* shall think it inconsistent with his Interest, and perhaps his Safety, that any Persons of distinguish'd Abilities shou'd remain in Power.

Courtier. Again, on the *Minister*! — This is the Malice of all your Party — on whatever the Argument turns, some way or other a Minister must be brought in.

Country Gent. Sir, I heartily wish there were no room to do so: But, as I find you as good as give up this Point, give me leave to put a few more *Queries* to you on some others, which the Majority of our late Courtly Representatives were equally incensed at. I think the next, as to order of Time, was that of humbly intreating to be inform'd, how far Mr Attorney General had proceeded in prosecuting the Managers of the *Charitable Corporation*; as pursuant to an Address, presented to his Majesty in the former Session, and his Majesty's most gracious Answer, they had been made to hope; and therefore had a kind of Right to expect, since Promises from the Throne are always Sacred. Now, I wou'd fain see by what Political Colours you can varnish over the Injustice of rejecting so reasonable a Demand.

Courtier. Sir, It requires no Varnish: The Nature of this Motion speaks itself plainly; and shews it was made with no other Intent than to create Divisions.

Country

Country Gent. Will you then maintain, that the fraudulent Dealings of some of that Company were not a Grievance to the Subject, and that we had not a Right to expect the Persons who were guilty, should be brought to a condign and exemplary Punishment?

Courtier. Sir, it is my Opinion, that we have nothing to do whether they are ever punished or not, since the Parliament has made Provision for the Sufferers, by the Lottery.

Country Gent. It would be easy to make a long Descant on the Insufficiency of that Provision to make good their Losses, but I shall wave that for the present, and answer you by a Question, Who are the Persons who make this Reparation to them?

Courtier. Certainly those who venture their Money in the Lottery.

Country Gent. Then have not such Contributors Reason to desire a public Punishment may be inflicted on these Delinquents.

Courtier. Not at all, Sir, since they are so only thro' the Hopes of increasing their own Store.

Country Gent. That I am willing to grant; but can you as readily give a Reason, wherefore a Majority of the House of Commons should oppose the Motion made for an humble Address to his Majesty, that an Account of the Prosecution should be laid before them?

them? Was it out of any Consideration for those Offenders, or that for another Person, who, 'tis shrewdly suspected, had a fellow-feeling with them in this Affair, and had assured them, that in all Events he would find Means to screen them from public Justice.

Courtier. O, Sir, all these Things will one Day be taken Care of: but there were many and great Things of a different Nature to employ this Session, and left no Time for what at more Leisure will doubtless be considered.

Country Gent. Well, Sir, this shifting off is something more modest, than asserting there was no Reason for the Motion being made. And since you will not allow my Argument, that no Time ought to be lost for the Redress of Grievances, I shall omit saying any thing more on this Head, and proceed to the next; which is the Bill to amend and render more effectual an Act made in the ninth Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne, entituled, *An Act for securing the Freedom of Parliaments, by further qualifying the Members to sit in the House of Commons.*

Now, Sir, since Experience has convinced us that this Act stood in need of an Amendment, was it consistent with a true public Spirit, and a disinterested Love of Country to oppose such an Amendment?—I confess
nothing

nothing can seem more strange to me than that any Gentleman, really and verily qualified to fill a Seat in that August House, should give his Vote on the contrary Party, —in that great and important Council of the Nation ; methinks none should enrol themselves, or suffer others to be enrolled, who were not in all respects strictly qualified for the Discharge of so weighty a Trust. Too few, or too great a Number of Years, are, in my Opinion, Objections might lawfully be made: For, as to the first, tho' the Parliament is called the School of Politics, we ought to remember that it is a School where these Lessons are not to be learned but practised:—And as to the other, the Infirmities, both of Mind and Body, to which an extreme old Age is incident, need no Explanation, so I shall only say, that no Person who has the Misfortune to be incapable of paying his *constant Attendance* at the House, or of giving a *due Attention* to the Business of it when he is there, can be truly qualified to represent a City, Country, Borough, or Corporation----much less ought any one to pretend to it who has not a sufficient Stake in the Place for which he would be elected, to give his Electors room to hope, at least, he will be careful of it's Interests. —But infinitely worse does it become him to affect the Title of one of the Fathers of his Country, who is publickly known to be
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under any Influence but that of his own Conscience. We ought, if possible, to keep all such out of the House of Commons as hold any Office of considerable Value during Pleasure, and all who have near Relations depending on the Court, because all *such* are liable to be *over-awed* or *persuaded*. For tho' a Man may wish well to his Country, and in the betraying thereof, knows that at the long run he mischiefs and enslaves his Posterity, if not himself; yet the Narrowness of Mens Minds is such, as makes them more tenderly apprehend a small *present* Damage than a far greater *hereafter*. Such Men must of necessity be under a great Temptation and Distraction, when their *Consciencies* and *Interests* look different Ways,---For, to say Truth, an *Office* is but a softer Word for a *Pension*; and tho' to be the King's Servant is no Bar from being a Parliament-Man, or from serving his Country honestly in that Station, and no doubt several of them have, at several times, well discharged the same, yet frequently such Persons (unworthily) guessing at their Prince by themselves, are apt to vote *right* or *wrong*, as they imagine will most please the *Prerogative* Party; and 'tis a hard matter to oblige that great, and perhaps, *corrupt Minister* who supports him, and do Justice to those who *elected* him. Therefore, since such Men know beforehand the Inconveniencies that attend the

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Trust

Trust of a Member of Parliament *faithfully* discharged, 'tis very suspicious when they use any Efforts to be chosen; and I think the Freeholders are bound in Charity, nor can do them a greater Courtesy than to answer their Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *not to lead them into Temptation.*

There are many more Objections which 'tis to be hoped will have some Weight at the ensuing Election; but had this Bill past into a Law, it might probably have saved some Gentlemen, who are unduly qualified, the Trouble and Expence which necessarily attends setting up for a Candidate.

Courtier. It is the Business of the Electors to look into the Merits of the Person who offers his Service as their Representative; if any one unduly qualified succeeds in his Attempt, it is their own Fault; therefore I see not the least Occasion for any Amendment in the Act you mention, which in itself is full, and strong enough already.

Country Gent. No, Sir, the Speeches made on the other Side of the Question very plainly demonstrate that it is far from being so; and were there but the minutest Particular to be added by human Wisdom, for the rendering it more effectual, even that ought not to have been neglected in such Times as these, and in a Matter which is of such infinite Importance to us.

The old Excuse of this Motion being
G made

made in an improper Season, will not here servethe Turn, because, it being the last Session of the *old* Parliament, no Time so proper as that to guard against all Miscarriages in the Choice of a *new* one.

Courtier. Sir, I cannot allow those Speeches you mention to contain any Arguments forcible enough to oblige the Parliament to waste any Time in making Alterations in an Act, which I still maintain, stands in no need of any.

Country Gent. To make a Recapitulation of those Arguments would be too tedious in this Place; and as I doubt not but they will be set forth at large for the Satisfaction of the good People of *England*, and as a kind of Guide or Light-house to the Freeholders in their elective Capacity, I shall trouble you no farther on this Subject; but cannot part from you till I hear what Defence you will make for the rejecting another Motion, which indeed was the Consequence of a former one that had received the same Fate.—After saying this, I believe it needless to inform you, I mean that, for Securing the Freedom of Parliaments by limiting the Number of Officers for sitting in the House of Commons.

Courtier. Sir, you may well call it the Consequence of a former one, since 'tis obvious the same Spirit of Disaffection which begat the one was the Parent also of the other.

What

What can be more cruel and unjust than to deprive such Officers, as are worthy of the Trust, from the Honour of serving their King and Country in a double Capacity.

Country Gent. I am far from being against any worthy Gentleman exerting his Abilities in all Places which may have need of him: But still, methinks, there ought to be some Limitation as to the Number, to secure the Independence of Parliaments: 'Tis true, there had been less occasion for such a Bill had the former pass'd into a Law, of not leaving them so wholly under the Influence of the Crown, as to put it in the Power of any future wicked and ill-designing *Minister* to make their Votes in his Favour be the Test of their Merit, and the Means of preserving their Commissions: But since that was thrown out, and one great Reason given for it, was, that it would be establishing a Military Power in the Legislature, it very ill became the Persons who reason'd in that manner, to disapprove a Limitation of the Number of them for sitting in the House of Commons, especially at a Time when we know not how greatly they may increase.—In what manner can we account for Arguments so entirely opposite to each other, coming from the same Mouths, and almost in the same Breath? Can those Gentlemen take ill, to be call'd inconsistent with themselves? or can they

hope that were the People even more stupid than they have been represented by the Advocates of a certain Person, would not see thro' such shallow Artifices, tho' supported by the most unparallell'd Assurance ?

Courtier. Well, Sir, it is not to be doubted but your Party will say as much as possible on all these Heads ; but as they have been already moved in Parliament, and rejected by a considerable Majority, I think it is the Duty of every *Englishman* to sit down satisfied, nor presume to contest the Wisdom of their *Negative*.

CountryGent. You, Sir, may be as complaisant as you please, but for my part I cannot think we deserve the Name of Free *Britons*, if we are not allowed to examine not only into the Merits of every Motion made in Parliament, but also into the *Motives* which caused them to be rejected : And in enumerating these Bills and some others, which I could name, but shall reserve what I have to say on them till another Opportunity, it is very remarkable, that whatever as been moved by *one* Party has been constantly rejected, and every thing presented by the *other* pass'd into a Law, as tho' it was not in the Power of the *one* to have even *one just or honest Thought*, and the *other* were *always righteous and infallible*.—What, in this last Session, has been *refused* to the *Crown* ? —NOTHING.—What has been obtained for the Freedom of Parliaments or the Security

Security of the People in general? No-
 THING.—As though they met *only* to
 make *Concessions*, and the business of *Re-
 dress* was of no Moment, and the least
 of their Concern. Certainly, among the
 number of Things moved, and petitioned
 for, by those who are called the *Country
 Party*, some must have been *wise* and *good*;
 it wou'd be too gross an Absurdity to sup-
 pose they were *all weak* and *wicked*. I dare
 answer, whoever thoroughly considers the
 State of our Affairs at *home* and *abroad*, and
 at the same Time remembers we are a *Free
 People*, not govern'd by the *arbitrary Will*
 of *one* Person, will readily agree, that many
 Motions were made, both *wise* and *good*;
well timed, and *well calculated* for the *pub-
 lic Safety*, however they might happen to
 be against the *Aims* and *Interest* of *parti-
 cular* Persons. But they have met the usual
 fate of Things, which happened not to relish
 with the *Generalissimo* of the *Robertsmen*;
 nor is it to be wonder'd at, if we reflect
 that in these latter Times, it is foretold, *a
 Beast shall arise, having many Horns*; and
*much Power shall be given unto him, to per-
 secute the Lamb and his flock*. — In fine,
 shou'd any Stranger demand of us what
 we thought of the Proceedings of the last
 Session of the last Parliament, we cou'd
 only say, That illustrious Assembly met, —
 Set for some Months, — Debated, — and
 determin'd on many Essential Points, — but
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the Consequence of their Determinations, none will dare presage.

Courtier. Oh, Sir ! 'tis easy to guess at what you mean ; his Majesty's most gracious Message, and the Parliaments Address upon it, has manifested such an entire Confidence, both on one side and the other, as is no way pleasing to your Party.

Country Gent. You talk, Sir, as if that were the only extraordinary Proof of the Compliance of our late Representatives, and artfully pass over others which may not seem less so, to some People in the World : 'Twou'd be too tedious to descend to Particulars ; but, what think you of the Red and White Herring Bill, by which, notwithstanding the late Duty on Salt, an annual Subsidy is inevitably granted for eight Years to come ; nor ought their rejecting the Bill for repealing the Septennial Act, ever to be forgotten by either *Minister*, or *People* ; 'twas well intended for the good of one of them, at least, and if their Interests should happen to be directly opposite, who can help it. As to Addressing on his Majesty's most gracious Message, I must acknowledge, tho' there were extremely strong Reasons urg'd in the Debate against it, that it shows a Love and Zeal for his Majesty, which must certainly oblige so generous and grateful a Prince to make the best use of it. Nor shou'd I make the least

Cavil

Cavil at it, if I were sure it never wou'd be quoted as a Precedent for some future Monarch to obtain the same, not actuated by the same Principles; nor the same Paternal Care for the Interest of his Subjects; or sure that on such a Monarch's not being able to obtain a Grant his Predecessor enjoy'd, as perhaps we may have Parliaments less complaisant, than this has been, a misunderstanding might not arise between Prince and People fatal to the Peace of the Nation.

Courtier. Well, Sir, since all these Concessions have been made, we ought to think there were very just Reasons for them, at least till we see any thing to the contrary.

Country Gent. I am dumb, Sir, whatever are my interior Thoughts.

From what has been said, our Thoughts will naturally turn on the *Merits* of the preceeding Arguments, and thence be led into some Reflections on that Assembly, that grand Barrier of *British Liberty*, the Honourable House of Commons, which determin'd the Point. But as that is a Subject which wou'd carry us beyond our present purpose, if consider'd in it's full Extent, we shall only make a few cursory Remarks on the following Heads.

First,

First, The Virtue of our Representatives.

Secondly, The Wisdom of a Majority.

Thirdly, The ill Consequences of losing ground in the Esteem of the People.

Lastly, The Fatality of Empires, with their Symptoms, and some *Seasonable* Laconic Hints to the *Electors* of Great Britain.

And first --- The House of Commons, of all the three Parts of the Legislature, is generally the dearest to the *People*, for this Reason, because it is chosen by the *People*, and upon a Supposition that it will most likely adhere to their Interests. It is the Offspring of every County, City, and Borough, to act for them, consult for them on all such Measures as shall be thought most conducive to the *general Good*. When this great and glorious End is duly answer'd; When the *Representative* never loses sight of the *Represented*; When no *sinister, selfish View* has the Power to *work upon* his *Integrity*; when he is not *supine, or lukewarm*, never *absent* without the most justifiable Cause, but *honestly and zealously* attends the Service of the House, Then,
and

and *then alone* is he justly stiled a *Patriot*, a *Father of his Country*. A *Senate* composed of such truly public Spirits, *acting*, as I have somewhere read, by *Universal Concert*, upon *Public Principles*, and for *public Ends*; uninfluenced by any over-grown *Leader*; who, instead of undertaking for *Majorities*, is ready to comply with general, *sober Results*, tho' not so advantageous to himself, is the most consummate Good a *Country* can wish for.

But when, alas! are we to hope for this *Phoenix Assembly*? When shall the *Influence* of one cease to direct the many? When shall each Member despise to inlist himself in a *Party*, and maintain it's *Opinions*, right or wrong, with the *Zeal* of a *Sectarian*? When shall he have *Opinions* and *Thoughts* of his own? When shall he *act* and *talk* of himself; and not deliver what is convey'd to him by his great *Leader*, as *Wind thro' an Organ*? When shall he reject, with noble *Scorn*, the *Nourishment* which has been *chew'd* and *digested* before it comes into his *Mouth*? — I confess, these are too difficult *Questions* for me to resolve, and this *Regulation*, to some, may even seem impracticable. 'Tis certain, indeed, it may be objected, supposing such an *Assembly* necessarily mixt, in *Point of Sense* and *Honesty*, proposing, debating,

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resolving,

resolving, voting according to the *meer natural* Motions of their own *little or much* Understanding, that abundance of *crude* and *pernicious* Overtures wou'd arise; True; but then they wou'd only float a few Minutes, and vanish; because this must be said in behalf of human Kind, that *common Sense*, and *plain Reason*, while Men are disengag'd from *acquired* Opinions, will ever have some general Influence upon their Minds: 'Tis only *Corruption* that peryerts Mens Understandings, and misguides their Wills.

To describe how this Influence prevails in an Assembly, whether by a sort of Instinct, or secret Composition of Nature, or Attraction of the Star, which presided at the Birth of the Leader, or those he wears on his Cloaths, rather than by the innate Possession of any great Abilities, wou'd be a Task too difficult at present, and perhaps not altogether safe.

Periculosa plenum opus alea.

However that be, when the *Leader* is once fixed, with great Power of *obliging*, there will never fail to be Followers, and the stragglers looking so ridiculous and insignificant, will immediately, like Sheep, run into the Flock.

This

This, therefore, may be asserted concerning *Leaders*, that while they continue to have Influence in public Assemblies, the Matters debated, will of Course be subject to Mistakes and Miscarriages; for, I think, the Maxim of *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*, is to be understood of the universal Bent and Current of a People, not of the *bare* Majority of a few Representatives, which is too often procured by *little Arts*, great *Industry*, and *proper* Application. Therefore when we meet a *few words* put together, which are called the *Vote*, or *Resolution*, of an Assembly, and which cannot possibly be reconcil'd to *Prudence*, or *Public Good*; it is most charitable to conjecture, that such a *Vote* has been conceiv'd, and born and bred in a *private* Brain; afterwards rais'd and supported by an *obsequious* Party, and then, with usual Method, confirm'd by an *artificial* Majority. Such a Subserviency, such an Implicitness to the Notions of *one*, or *more*, cannot certainly be call'd, with any Propriety, the *United Wisdom of the Nation*. To run thus blindly, into all the Measures of a *Leader*, and say, without farther Examining, I vote with *such a one*, in my Opinion, is rather the *Wisdom of an Individual*. Is it not then far beneath the Dignity of human Nature, and human Reason, to act upon such *servile*

H 2 Conditions ?

Conditions? And can an Assembly, where Members of this Complexion preside, long maintain it's Veneration? A virtuous Parliament, like a virtuous Woman, ought to be free even from Suspicion of Dishonesty. If ever a People should begin to entertain such mean Ideas of their Representatives, it would infallibly beget *Disrespect* first, and then *Contempt*; the pernicious Consequences of which are too numerous to be touch'd on here: I shall only say, if I may compare *Temporal* with *Spiritual* Things, let us cast our Eyes upon the R—t Rev—the B—ps, and we shall soon discover a wide Difference between our present Awe and Reverence for the L—n, and that paid to it formerly; which, apply'd to the preceeding Case, will exhibit to us some faint Resemblance of a House of Commons labouring under the general Disesteem of the Numbers they represent.

To conclude: As to the Fate of Empires, all Forms of Government having been instituted by Men, are mortal like their Authors, and have their Periods of Duration limited, as well as those of private Persons. This is a Truth of common Observation; but there are few, who take the Pains to examine how those Diseases in a State are bred, that bring

on it's Dissolution, which would be a very useful Enquiry; for tho' we cannot prolong the Date of a *Common-wealth* beyond the Decree of Heaven, any more than *human Life* beyond the Strength of the Seminal Virtue, yet we may manage a *sickly Constitution*, and preserve a *strong one*; we may watch, and prevent Accidents; ward off a great Blow from *without*, and purge away an ill Humour that is lurking *within*; and by these and other Methods render a State *long-liv'd*, if not *immortal*.

A State has the Appearance of *Fatality*, and we may justly apprehend it's Period is approaching, when a Concurrence of many Circumstances both *within* and *without* unite towards it's Ruin: When the whole Body of the People are either stupidly negligent, or else giving in with all their Might to those very Practices, that are working their Destruction. To see whole Bodies of Men breaking a Constitution by the very same evil Qualities by which so many have been broke before: In short, to be encompassed with the greatest Dangers from *without*; to be swallowed up by Corruption *within*; then to be *secure* and *senseless* under all this, making it the very least of our Concern; these, and some others that might be
named,

named, appear to me to be the most likely Symptoms in a State of *Sickness unto Death*.

Quod procul à Nobis fleat fortuna Gu-
bernans,

Et ratio potius, quam res persuadeat ipsa.

LUCRET.

But as a Diffolution of all Bodies supposes the Renovation more perfect, we flatter ourselves, that the Conduct of the last Parliament, especially in the last Sessions, will have so much Weight with every *Englishman* as to engage them, one and all, to set aside all Views but that of electing such a *new* one as will entirely free us from all the Apprehensions above-mentioned. What has been granted to *one* Party, and what has been refused to the *other* must be impartially considered; among which the Attempt to introduce effectual Slavery by way of EXCISE, ought never to be forgot, nor the Names of those who voted for it. A Traveller, that has been conducted for any considerable Time by a Guide, when arrived at his Journey's End, looks back on the past difficult and dangerous, intricate and roundabout, Paths he has been led thro'; examines whether it proceeded from *Wilfulness* or *Ignorance*; *Selfishness* or the *Motives*

tive of avoiding the *Duns* of several *troublesome Creditors* on the Road; and regardless of the Cause, makes Choice of a more *honest* and *expert* Guide in his next Journey. In like manner, the Inhabitants on our Sea-Coasts, when the Badness of a Light-house has been the dismal Occasion of many *Wrecks* for several Seasons, take Care, when they erect another, to have it composed of *Brighter Materials*. And shall a People, ever famous for their innate Notions of *Liberty*, and warring with *Oppression* in every *Shape*, distinguish less now than heretofore, and blindly mistake the *Pensioner* for the *Patriot*? Shall they suffer themselves to be deluded by *Pretences*, while *Facts* speak a flat Contradiction to them? Shall they shew less *Veneration* for *Promoters* of good *Schemes*, and steady *Opposers* of *Bad*, than they have nobly testified *Abhorrence* for the *Opposers* of *Good*, and *Promoters* of *Bad*? No, It is not to be doubted but that both will be distinguished in this important Crisis, when, if it should be our sad Fate to be represented by Persons of the same Principles, they may perhaps find means to perpetuate themselves, and put it out of our Power, ever more to have a Parliament that will think the Good of the People worth their Consideration. It therefore behoves us, now his
Majesty

Majesty has issued out his Writs for a Parliament, to chuse, as much as in us lies, a Good House of Commons;— it behoves us I say to do so, as we tender our Religion, our Liberties, our Estates, and our Posterity : upon this Choice depends our own, and their, *well or ill Being* ; 'tis here, as in War or Marriage, there is no room for *second Errors, one Act*, nay one fatal decisive *Vote*, may ruin a whole Nation beyond Retrieve.

How came *France*, which once had Laws, Privileges, Parliaments, Liberties, Charters, as well as we, to groan under arbitrary Power? How came the Nobility and Gentry to be Slaves to the Court, depend upon the War, and seek all their Grandeur in assisting the King's Tyranny? Why all this was brought upon them by taking too little Care of their Privileges and Charters when they had them, by being too secure and indolent, by suffering the Enchroachments of their Monarchs, and permitting the Tools of Tyranny gradually to undermine and supplant their Liberties; in short, by chusing corrupt and wicked Members, and tamely permitting those Members to give up their Constitution.

Learn once, O *Britons* ! but to neglect your Liberties, give up your Rights, and
chuse

chuse Representatives that will do the same, and *France* may say to you, as the dead Man's Motto says to the living :

As you are, so was I;

As I am, so will you be.

I know very well, there are People sanguine enough to ridicule such Apprehensions as these; they will have it ready in their Mouths, that the People of *England* are not of a *Genius* and *Temper* ever to admit *Slavery* among them; and bring many Common-place Arguments in support of this Tenet; Nay, I think it is pretty plain, that those who are the greatest Enemies to Liberty, most preach up to us the great Extent of it we enjoy, and the perfect Security we have on that score; but these are a Set of Men whose real Principles (thank Heaven) are known: As for the other, who truly *believe* as they *speak*, in my Opinion, they reason on very short Views, and a moderate Compass of Thought; for I think it is a great Error to count upon the Genius of a Nation, as a standing Argument in all Ages; since there is hardly a Spot of Ground in *Europe*, where the Inhabitants have not frequently, and entirely changed their *Temper* and *Genius*. Neither can I see any

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Reason

Reason why the *Genius* of a Nation should be more fixed in point of *Government*, than in their *Morals*, *Religion*, *Language*, *Diet*, and *Complexion*, which do all notoriously vary almost in every Age, and may every one of them have great Influence upon Men's Notions of Government.

Let us not therefore be too secure, and think our Dissolution impossible. There has been, and may be again, in some remote Time, a Reign of a *Tiberius*, and I hope the Proceedings of the last Parliament will convince us, how great and dangerous an Influence 'tis possible for *One* to have upon the *Many*. The Maxim, indeed, is certain, that *we cannot be undone but by ourselves*. This, therefore, is the *Crisis* of our Fate: on the ensuing *Election* depends our All, the *Preservation*, or *Ruin* of our Constitution and Liberties: Oh may every Freeholder keep it ever in his Mind, that great Things have been gained even by one *single Vote*, that what he now resolves must stand for *seven Years irrevocable*; perhaps for *many more*: May no Consideration prevail on him to lose Remembrance of that most pernicious Bill to Liberty, that the bitterest Enemy to it ever invented, or Ambition, and Wantonness of Power attempted to bring to pass; the *Excise*. In fine, may he
make

[59]

make a serious and impartial Animadversion on the whole Conduct of the *last* Parliament, and he will want no farther Directions to guide him in the Choice of a *new* One.

FINIS.

